What is claimed is:

1   1.   A method for managing electronic document production over a
2   computer network, the method comprising:
3   on a first computing device, capturing a document production request and
4   generating a user interface with user accessible controls for selecting services
5   for producing the document; and
6   on a second computing device, merging selected services and the
7   captured document production request into a document production plan and
8   delivering the document production plan in a device specific format to one or
9   more selected document production devices.

1   2.   The method of Claim 1, further comprising identifying services
2   available on the network, and wherein the act of generating comprises
3   generating a user interface with user accessible controls for selecting the
4   identified services.

1   3.   The method of Claim 2, wherein the act of generating further
2   comprises generating a user interface with user accessible controls for selecting
3   services not available on the network.

1   4.   The method of Claim 2, wherein the act of identifying includes
2   querying devices present on the network.

1   5.   The method of Claim 2, wherein the act of identifying includes
2   querying a services database.

1   6.   The method of Claim 1, wherein the act of capturing includes
2   receiving the document production request from an application and converting
3   the production request into a generic format.

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1   7.   The method of Claim 1, further comprising identifying document

2   production devices capable of providing the selected services and generating a

3   user interface with user accessible controls for selecting one or more, if any, of

4   the identified document production devices.

1   8.   The method of Claim 1, further comprising monitoring the status of

2   delivered document production plans.

1   9.   A computer program product for managing electronic document

2   production over a computer network, the product comprising a computer

3   useable medium having computer readable instructions thereon for:

4   capturing a document production request on a first computing device;

5   generating a user interface with user accessible controls for selecting

6   services for producing the document;

7   merging the selected services and the captured document production

8   request into a document production plan; and

9   delivering the document production plan in a device specific format to one

10   or more selected document production devices from a second computing device.

11   10.   The product of Claim 9, wherein the instructions for capturing

12   comprise instructions for receiving a document production request from an

13   application and transferring the production request to the second computing

14   device.

1   11.   The product of Claim 9, comprising further instructions for

2   identifying services available on the network, and the instructions for generating

3   comprise instructions for generating a user interface with user accessible

4   controls for selecting the identified services.

1   12.   The product of Claim 11, wherein the instructions for generating

2   comprise further instructions for generating a user interface with user accessible

3   controls for selecting the services not available on the network.

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1   13.   The product of Claim 11, wherein the instructions for identifying
2   comprise instructions for querying devices present on the network.

1   14.   The product of Claim 11, wherein the instructions for identifying
2   comprise instructions for querying a services database.

1   15.   The product of Claim 14, comprising further instructions for
2   identifying services available on the network but not contained in the service
3   database and updating the services database with the identified services.

1   16.   The product of Claim 15, further comprising identifying services
2   not available on the network and not contained in the services database and
3   updating the services database with the identified services.

1   17.   The product of Claim 9, further comprising instructions for
2   identifying document production devices capable of providing the selected
3   services and generating a user interface with user accessible controls for
4   selecting one or more, if any, of the identified document production devices.

1   18.   The product of Claim 9, further comprising instructions for
2   monitoring the production status of delivered document production plans.

1   19.   In a computer network, a system for managing document
2   production requests, comprising:
3   a production client operable to receive a document production request,
4   the client comprising a capture driver operable to capture the document
5   production request and an interface translator operable to display user accessible
6   controls for producing the document production request;
7   a production server in electronic communication with the client and
8   operable to direct one or more selected devices to produce the captured
9   document production request with selected services and options, the server
10 comprising a services engine operable to inform the client of potential services

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11   and a production engine operable to deliver the captured document production

12   request to the selected device or devices.

1   20.   The system of Claim 19, wherein the capture driver is further

2   operable to transform the document production request into a selected format

3   and to transfer the formatted document production request to the production

4   server.

1   21.   The system of Claim 19, wherein the server further comprises a

2   web server for communicating with the client and the client interface translator

3   is a web browser.

1   22.   The system of Claim 21, wherein the services engine includes a

2   services locator operable to identify services available on the network.

1   23.   The system of Claim 21, wherein the production server further

2   comprises a database of known services available on the network.

1   24.   The system of Claim 23, wherein the services locator is operable

2   to identify available services by querying the database and by querying the

3   document production devices present on the network.

1   25.   The system of Claim 19, wherein the services engine further

2   includes a device identifier operable to identify one or more, if any, available

3   document production devices that are compatible with the selected services and

4   options and to provide the interface translator with information required to

5   display user accessible controls for selecting one or more, if any, of the

6   identified document production devices.

1   26.   The system of Claim 19, wherein the production engine includes a

2   production queue.

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1   27.   The system of Claim 26, wherein the production engine further
2   includes a production manager in electronic communication with the production
3   queue.

1   28.   The system of Claim 19, wherein the Client further comprises a
2   server locator.

1   29.   A distributed document production system comprising:
2   one or more document production devices;
3   a production client operating on a first computing device;
4   a production server operating on a second computing device, the
5   production server in electronic communication with the production client and the
6   document production devices, the production server operable to receive a
7   production request from the production client and to deliver the request to one
8   or more selected production devices in a device specific format.

1   30.   The document production system of Claim 29, wherein the
2   production client comprises a capture driver operable to electronically transfer a
3   document production request to the production server and an interface translator
4   operable to display user accessible controls for selecting services for producing
5   the document.

1   31.   The document production system of Claim 30, wherein the capture
2   driver is further operable to transform the document production request into a
3   generic format and to transfer the formatted document production request to the
4   production server.

1   32.   The document production system of Claim 29, wherein the
2   production server comprises a services engine operable to inform the production
3   client of potential services and a production engine operable to deliver the
4   document production request with selected services to one or more of the
5   document production devices.

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1   33.   The document production system of Claim 32, wherein the
2   interface translator is a web browser and the production server further
3   comprises a web server for communicating with the interface translator.

1   34.   The document production system of Claim 32, further comprising
2   a services database and wherein the services engine includes a services locator
3   operable to locate services by querying the services database.

1   35.   The document production system of Claim 34, wherein the
2   production services locator is further operable to locate services by querying the
3   document production devices.

1   36.   The document production system of Claim 34, wherein the
2   production server further includes an update service operable to update the
3   services database with services available on the document production devices
4   but not currently represented in the services database

1   37.   The document production system of Claim 36, wherein the
2   production engine includes drivers for the production devices and wherein the
3   update service is further operable identify new devices and to update the device
4   drivers with drivers for newly identified devices.

1   38.   The document production system of Claim 32, wherein the
2   services engine further includes a device identifier operable to identify one or
3   more, if any, of the document production devices that are compatible with the
4   selected services, and wherein the production engine is operable to supply the
5   interface generator with information to display user accessible controls for
6   selecting one or more, if any, of the identified document production devices.

1   39.   The document production system of Claim 32, wherein the
2   production engine includes a production queue and a production manager in
3   electronic communication with the production queue.

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1   40.   The system of Claim 30, wherein the production client further

2   comprises a server locator.

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